

Are You Selling Your Timber?

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Approximately 85 per cent of Ohio grown lumber is going into war industry. At least 90 per cent of this lumber is coming from farm woodlands. Timber marketing on the farm, therefore, is of great importance to woodland owners.

Timber is a bulky product. To get logs to the mills or manufacturing plants requires a large amount of labor. Cutting, logging, and sawing cost at least \$20 per thousand board feet. To this must be added, as a part of production, the cost of hauling the lumber, overhead operation, insurance, and taxes. What the timber buyer receives for it on the open lumber market, after deducting overhead and production expenses plus a reasonable profit, should determine the log or stumpage price. This is what the woodland owner is mostly concerned about.

The average woods owner often pleads ignorance in marketing his timber. This is because he pays little attention, usually, to the growth or production possibilities of his woods until he is offered a price by a prospective buyer. Then, he suddenly becomes aware that he has a marketing problem.

Timber should be sold on the open market like any other farm product. Timber, however, is not a perishable product. It can wait several months or even years before harvesting, if marketing conditions are not favorable.

The present seems a favorable time to sell timber.

Wood is needed for war!

The most urgent needs are for white oak for navy timber, black walnut for gun stocks, and tulip (yellow) poplar for aircraft industries. White ash and quality sugar maple are also in active demand. In fact, increased call, due to war production, for railroad ties, boxing and crating lumber, steel or car blocking, piling, mine props and pulpwood has created an active market for all native hardwoods.

SUGGESTIONS ON SELLING YOUR TIMBER

Make an Inventory of Saw Log Trees in Your Woods.—Include all trees over 14 inches in diameter at about 4½ feet above the ground. Smaller trees, under the Doyle Rule, scale out very little. Write down in a notebook or on ruled paper the kind of tree, size, and marketable height (if possible) of each tree in your woods. This is important information to have, especially when writing to a prospective buyer. He will want to know the number of white oak, black walnut, and other trees you have, with the diameter and length of each. Then he can decide whether he is interested in your timber. This information will save time and needless travel to and from the woods.

Estimating the Board Feet in Standing Timber.—The next step is to estimate the amount of standing timber in terms of board feet. To estimate timber accurately requires skill. Skill is acquired by practice.

The beginner might start by cutting a 16-foot pole. Place the pole against a tree. Note location on tree of top of the pole. Estimate the number of other logs of 16-foot, or other lengths, in the tree. Logs are cut into standard lengths of 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 feet.

Next, measure the diameter of the tree at 4½ feet, shoulder height. Say, for example, it measures 30 inches in diameter. You must then allow 2 inches for taper in each 16 feet. Also, allow 3 inches for bark.* This would make the diameter of the first log 25 inches in diameter inside the bark at the small end of the log.

After the dimensions of all the logs in the tree are calculated, then, by the aid of Doyle Log Rule, estimate the board feet of each tree.

Estimating the Board Feet of Each Tree.—The Doyle Log Rule is:

Deduct 4 from the diameter (in inches) of the small end of the log (not including the bark) and square the remainder. This gives the contents of a 16-foot log in board feet.

Using the example given above, $25 - 4 = 21$; $21 \times 21 = 441$. Therefore, according to this rule, there are 441 board feet in the first 16-foot log. For convenience in making estimates, use the following Doyle Log Rule Table.

By measuring the diameter of several trees and calculating height with the “eye,” it is surprising how one can “spot” 100, 200, 500, or even 1,000 board-feet trees. If you do not have the time or ability to estimate your own timber, perhaps someone in your neighborhood can be secured. Often a retired sawmill operator, or a disinterested buyer, will do this at a nominal fee.

A rough estimate is better than no estimate at all. It will give one at least a bargaining basis in selling timber.

Unfortunately, the Doyle Log Rule is unsatisfactory for scaling small trees, especially under 16 inches in diameter. For this reason, one should hesitate to sell small logs unless allowances are made for the difference between *scale* estimate and *actual* lumber cut at the mill.

Markets.—If you have local markets, use them. Most people know the saw mills working within their immediate vicinity. Obtain, if possible, a list of all the local saw mills or buyers. Also, write directly to wood-using industries within your area. Your County Agricultural Agent will assist you in getting in touch with the proper agency, or you may write directly to the Extension Forester, Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Wooster, Ohio. Perhaps your neighbors have sold timber during the past year and are in a position to give you helpful information.

The more buyers you have for your timber, the stronger will be the competitive bidding. This usually results in higher prices for the timber. In fact, selling under competitive bidding is about the only way the true sale value of timber can be obtained. It is poor policy to sell to the first buyer that comes along. When writing to prospective buyers, always give location of timber, nearest railroad or highway number, together with number of trees, kind and approximate size. *You* should have a board feet estimate, if possible, of each kind. This will give you a good basis for bargaining with the buyer.

If possible, use your own labor and equipment for cutting the logs. You will

* Bark thickness varies according to kind and diameter of tree.

LOG SCALE — DOYLE RULE (Board Feet Contents of Logs)

DIAMETER OF LOG (Inside Bark)	Length of Log in Feet				
	8	10	12	14	16
Inches					
8	8	10	12	14	16
9	12	16	19	22	25
10	18	22	27	31	36
11	24	31	37	43	49
12	32	40	48	56	64
13	40	51	61	71	81
14	50	62	75	87	100
15	60	76	91	106	121
16	72	90	108	126	144
17	84	106	127	148	169
18	98	122	147	171	196
19	112	141	169	197	225
20	128	160	192	224	256
21	144	181	217	253	289
22	162	202	243	283	324
23	180	226	271	316	361
24	200	250	300	350	400
25	220	276	331	386	441
26	242	302	363	423	484
27	264	331	397	463	529
28	288	360	432	504	576
29	312	391	469	547	625
30	338	422	507	591	676
31	364	456	547	638	729
32	392	490	588	686	784
33	420	526	631	736	841
34	450	562	675	787	900
35	480	601	721	841	961
36	512	640	768	896	1024
37	544	681	817	953	1089
38	578	722	867	1011	1156
39	612	766	919	1072	1225
40	648	810	972	1134	1296

not only receive pay for your timber, but also extra wages for cutting, skidding, or hauling logs to roadway or mill. Usually this can be done during slack periods on the farm. Winter is an excellent time to harvest the timber crop.

A timber sales agreement or contract should be written and properly signed. This should specify terms such as price per thousand board feet, or total sale price, number and approximate size of trees to cut.

The contract should have a time limit on removing the logs from the area. Sample contracts can be obtained from the Office of the Extension Forester at Wooster, Ohio.

Trees or logs of black walnut, white oak, white ash, and tulip poplar of select quality should be sold separately to special markets, such as veneer factories, rather than be used as local lumber. This, of course, is dependent upon size and number of trees.

It is impossible for the Extension Forester to make personal estimates or appraisals of every woods in the state. But, where meetings can be arranged through the County Agent's office, he will demonstrate timber estimating and discuss marketing.

A timber marketing and estimating service known as the Timber Production War Project (TPWP) is now available to woodland owners. This is under the supervision of the Federal Forest Service. Headquarters for local foresters have been established in several areas of the state. For further information regarding this project contact your county agent, or write directly to H.A. Svensen, Area Forester, Room 500-H, New Federal Building, Columbus, Ohio.

SUMMARY

1. Before making sales, determine the amount and value of the material for sale. It is possible for the woodland owner to do this himself.
2. Sell directly to the ultimate user, whenever possible. *Market saw logs rather than lumber.* Few woodland owners are in a position to saw and manufacture lumber.
3. Interest as many buyers as possible. Competition in buying results in greater profits to the seller. Advertise if necessary.
4. Always be sure the buyer can and will pay you.
5. Never cut timber until a definite market is located.
6. Take advantage of the marketing experience of neighbors and friends.
7. Do not depend upon the local market, when high-class timber is to be sold.
8. Sell your timber to the market for which it is best suited. If veneer logs are to be sold, sell them to veneer buyers, etc.
9. Use your own labor and power in the woods at times when other farm work is slack.
10. Always demand a written timber sale contract when selling timber. You can obtain information on marketing timber from your County Agent or by writing directly to the Extension Forester's Office at Wooster, Ohio.

LITERATURE AVAILABLE

The following materials will aid the woodland owner in timber marketing. They may be obtained from the Extension Forester at Wooster, or your County Extension Agent.

- "Measuring and Marketing Farm Timber"—Farmers' bulletin 1210 of the United States Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
- "Ohio Farm Woods"—Extension bulletin 142 of the Agricultural Extension Service, The Ohio State University
- "Woodland Management"—Extension bulletin 213 of the Agricultural Extension Service, The Ohio State University
- "Simple Methods of Estimating Timber"—Mimeograph Circular. Extension Forester, Wooster, Ohio
- "Handy Tables for Measuring Farm Timber (standing trees, saw logs, and pulpwood)"—Extension Forester, Wooster, Ohio